



**BRIEFING: SEPTEMBER 16, 2014 BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM #6**

**TO: Chairman Richard and Board Members**

**FROM: Michelle Boehm, Southern California Regional Director**

**DATE: September 16, 2014**

**RE: Status Updates on the Southern California Project Sections**

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**Background**

The purpose of this agenda item is to provide a status update regarding the development of the Southern California high-speed rail project sections (Bakersfield to Palmdale, Palmdale to Los Angeles, Los Angeles to Anaheim, and Los Angeles to San Diego) and to provide an overview of project elements under consideration going forward.

**Discussion**

The current objective of the program in Southern California is two-fold: (1) Bring high-speed rail service to the region as quickly as possible; and, (2) Complete regional transit improvement projects by 2020 to improve service, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and support the construction of the statewide high-speed rail system.

*Bringing HSR Service to Southern California*

Over the course of the past year, staff has worked to update alignments to reflect changed conditions and incorporate stakeholder comments for all Southern California sections. This process has resulted in a Supplemental Alternative Analysis (SAA) for the Palmdale to Los Angeles Section, which was presented in June, and will be followed by updated analysis on all other Southern California sections as we advance delivery of high-speed rail service into the most populous region of the State. As always, all efforts are accompanied by a comprehensive stakeholder outreach program.

*Completing Regional Transit Improvement Projects*

Also underway in Southern California is continued work on Early Action, or Bookend and Connectivity, projects. Developed as a joint effort between the Authority and Southern California transportation agencies<sup>1</sup>, the Early Action program will clear the way for high-speed

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<sup>1</sup> Southern California Association of Governments(SCAG), Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro), Metrolink, San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), City of Anaheim, Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), and San Bernardino Association of Governments (SANBAG)

rail by completing required local infrastructure projects early in order to minimize local impacts during the construction and provide immediate benefits to the Southern California transportation system. A Memorandum of Understanding approved by the Board in 2012 and funded by SB1029 codified the partnership between the Authority and these agencies. The first round of improvements between Burbank and Anaheim will materially improve existing LOSSAN and Metrolink service. These projects include the Southern California Regional Interconnector Project (SCRIP) and the Rosecrans/Marquardt, Doran Street, and State College Grade Separations. This round also includes another project targeted specifically to improve service on the Antelope Valley Line Corridor (Brighton to Roxford). Staff is in the process of developing agreements to fund these projects.

Connectivity projects, funded by voter approval of Proposition 1A, are in progress right now and already delivering benefits to users throughout the state. Projects located in Southern California include the Metro Regional Connector Transit Project, Metrolink Tier IV Locomotives, San Diego Metropolitan Transit System Blue Line Light Rail Improvements, and Advanced Signaling Systems (or Positive Train Control) for Metrolink, Pacific Surfliner and San Diego North County Transit District. Regionally, Positive Train Control is coming online starting this year, and the first of the new locomotives should arrive next year.

#### *Bakersfield to Palmdale Section*

Work continues on the planning, conceptual engineering, and environmental analyses and documentation for alignment alternatives between Bakersfield and Palmdale. In this section, refinements are being considered that would protect existing and planned green energy generation sites on the south side of the Tehachapi Mountains. Project activities currently underway include:

- Refining alternatives presented in the February 2012 Supplemental Alternatives Analysis
- Identifying environmental constraints and initiating discipline-specific impact analyses
- Performing surveys to supplement desktop analysis and collect data for future analysis
- Maintaining close coordination with the Palmdale to Los Angeles Section team for a seamless connection of alternatives in the Palmdale area
- Continuing stakeholder involvement

#### *Palmdale to Los Angeles Section*

An update on the Palmdale to Los Angeles Section was presented to the Board in June 2014. This update included information on station locations at Palmdale and Burbank, refinements to the alignments, introduction of an alternative corridor study area, and establishment of two project sections. While a more detailed discussion of the Palmdale to Burbank and Burbank to Los Angeles Sections is provided in Board Item #5, a summary is included here for reference.

The Environmental Documents for Palmdale to Burbank and Burbank to Los Angeles will be prepared separately to allow the sections to advance independently or concurrently, depending on the resolution of issues in each segment. The Regional Consultant team continues to evaluate and refine alignment alternatives for both sections. The following project elements in the Palmdale to Los Angeles Section are currently under review and development:

- A new corridor that connects Palmdale to Burbank. This corridor is part of the Scoping process described Board Item #5.
- An alignment through the Antelope Valley parallel to the existing Metrolink and Union Pacific rail corridor that accommodates planned local and regional investments.
- Alternatives analysis in the Acton area to address stakeholder concerns about impacts to schools, natural resources, and the community.
- Alternatives analysis in the San Fernando Valley to address the complexities of this corridor, right-of-way constraints, community impacts, and stakeholder comments.
- Ongoing coordination and collaboration with the teams planning for the development of notable new regional projects that may influence the Project Section, including:
  - The High Desert Corridor
  - TOD3 (Palmdale Transit Oriented Development Overlay Zone) and other ongoing planning efforts in the Antelope Valley
  - Bob Hope Airport Improvements
  - The Los Angeles River Revitalization Project
  - The LAUS Master Plan
  - The Southern California Regional Interconnector Project (SCRIP)

The Palmdale to Los Angeles Project Section team is currently refining the alternatives to address these project elements as well as specific stakeholder input. In addition, the City of Palmdale has submitted an application for Authority Station Area Planning funds to study and plan for the future arrival of high-speed rail at the Palmdale Transportation Center.

#### *Los Angeles to Anaheim Section*

Since the release of the Los Angeles to Anaheim 2010 SAA, the project's implementation phasing approach and focus on enhanced network integration with existing passenger rail services have been introduced. These elements, along with stakeholder feedback, have served as the basis for a comprehensive review of the previous SAA alternatives to ensure consistency and verify integration with new projects in the planning process. Specific project elements being evaluated for this Section include:

- Development of an urban corridor design approach to provide a consistent strategy to address constraints of these unique locations.
- Development of a construction phasing plan to allow for early investment in projects that have independent utility, increase safety, reliability, and corridor capacity.
- Coordination efforts at LAUS in support of the LAUS Master Plan and SCRIP.

The Los Angeles to Anaheim Project Section Team is currently refining the alternatives to address these project elements as well as specific stakeholder concerns.

#### *Los Angeles to San Diego Section*

Staff is working to finalize the refinement of alternatives in the Los Angeles to San Diego Section and to develop a strategy for coordinated planning and implementation of projects that would support near-term regional goals and high-speed rail in the future. This includes support

of early investment projects that will pave the way for high-speed rail service, provide immediate transportation benefits, and improve long-term operations of high-speed rail in California.

Work on the Los Angeles to San Diego Section is conducted in close coordination with the Southern California Inland Corridor Group (SOCAL ICG). The SOCAL ICG includes a variety of local transportation and planning agencies that have come together to advance work in this Section.

**Recommendation**

This is an informational item only, staff does not recommend any Board action at this time.